

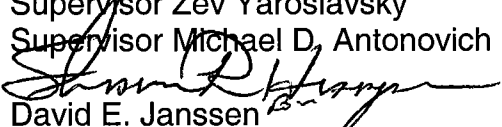


# County of Los Angeles CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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DAVID E. JANSSEN  
Chief Administrative Officer

April 8, 2004

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich  
  
From: David E. Janssen  
Chief Administrative Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

## **VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR DISABLED CITIZENS**

On November 25, 2003, on a motion by Supervisor Antonovich, your Board instructed the Chief Administrative Officer's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), in consultation with the Sheriff and the Fire Chief, to work with the Commission on Disabilities (Commission) and the departments of Community and Senior Services and Public Social Services to determine the feasibility of establishing a voluntary registration system for disabled citizens. The system would provide critical information and evacuation notifications to disabled citizens during emergency incidents and natural disasters. A report of the findings was due within 60 days. Due to the complex nature of this assignment and the need for multi-agency involvement, your Board subsequently granted an additional 60-day extension.

OEM established an ad hoc committee comprised of the departments listed above to identify issues and review information on available communications systems. The committee determined that two primary questions must be answered in order to complete this assignment and make recommendations to your Board: 1) Does the disabled community support development of a voluntary registration system that identifies them in order for government to provide them with alerts and warnings and, if yes, what should be the scope of the system, and 2) Does technology exist that can communicate rapidly with potentially a million or more registrants and, if yes, what would it cost. The ad hoc committee has met on a number of occasions to discuss issues and review information from communications system providers. To attempt to better address the questions, the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance (OAAC) was invited to join the committee. The committee also invited input from the UCLA Advanced Policy Institute-Living Independently in Los Angeles (LILA).

While both the OAAC and LILA agree that the concept of disaster registration and notification of the disabled is a potentially worthwhile project, there are several concerns regarding implementation of such a system:

- Will the system create a false expectation among registrants that government will provide them with a guaranteed and prompt response during periods of emergency or disaster?
- What agency(ies) will be responsible for outreach and public education/registration? Will there be a funding stream to support these efforts?
- The potential registrant pool is vast; how will listings be maintained and how will privacy be protected?
- Will this system support and enhance the 911 system or solely focus on response to disasters?
- Is government liable if a system is installed but, in spite of the emergency warning, people are still injured or killed?

The committee received an estimate of approximately \$350,000 to purchase a communications system. The cost to design, implement and maintain the program and communications system will not be known until the program's scope is determined and the fundamental questions are answered.

The committee asked the Commission on Disabilities to assist them to address the fundamental concerns. The Commission has agreed to discuss the issues at their next regular meeting on April 21, 2004. I am requesting an extension of thirty days from that date to allow time to finalize our report and send it to County Counsel for review prior to submission to your Board.

DEJ:CP  
GB:jl

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Sheriff  
County Counsel  
Director of Affirmative Action Compliance  
Director of Community and Senior Services  
Fire Chief  
Director of Public Social Services  
Contact, Commission on Disabilities  
UCLA Advanced Policy Institute-LILA, Project Director